

on a debt is suspended or terminated, the debt remains delinquent and further collection action may be pursued at a later date in accordance with the standards set forth in §§1.900 through 1.953. When VA discharges a debt in full or in part, further collection action is prohibited. Therefore, VA should make the determination that collection action is no longer warranted before discharging a debt. Before discharging a debt, VA must terminate debt collection action.

(b) Upon discharge of an indebtedness, VA must report the discharge to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in accordance with the requirements of 26 U.S.C. 6050P and 26 CFR 1.6050P-1. VA may request Treasury or Treasury-designated debt collection centers to file such a discharge report to the IRS on VA's behalf.

(c) When discharging a debt, VA must request that any liens of record securing the debt be released.

(d) 31 U.S.C. 3711(i)(2) requires agencies to sell a delinquent nontax debt upon termination of collection action if the Secretary of the Treasury determines such a sale is in the best interests of the United States. Since the discharge of a debt precludes any further collection action (including the sale of a delinquent debt), VA may not discharge a debt until the requirements of §3711(i)(2) have been met.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3711; 38 U.S.C. 501)

[69 FR 62200, Oct. 25, 2004]

§ 1.945 Authority to suspend or terminate collection action on certain benefit indebtedness; authority for refunds.

(a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Secretary) may suspend or terminate collection action on all or any part of an indebtedness owed to VA by a member of the Armed Forces who dies while on active duty, if the Secretary determines that such suspension or termination of collection is appropriate and in the best interest of the United States.

(b) The Secretary may terminate collection action on all or any part of an amount owed to the United States for an indebtedness resulting from an individual's participation in a benefits program administered by the Secretary,

other than a program as described in paragraph (h) of this section, if the Secretary determines that such termination of collection is in the best interest of the United States. For purposes of this paragraph, an *individual* is any member of the Armed Forces or veteran who dies as a result of an injury incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while serving in a theater of combat operations in a war or in combat against a hostile force during a period of hostilities on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) For purposes of this section:

(1) *Theater of combat operations* means the geographic area of operations where the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense determines that combat occurred.

(2) *Period of hostilities* means an armed conflict in which members of the United States Armed Forces are subjected to danger comparable to danger to which members of the Armed Forces have been subjected in combat with enemy armed forces during a period of war, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense.

(d) The Secretary may refund amounts collected after the death of a member of the Armed Forces or veteran in accordance with this paragraph and paragraph (e) of this section.

(1) In any case where all or any part of a debt of a member of the Armed Forces, as described under paragraph (a) of this section, was collected, the Secretary may refund the amount collected if, in the Secretary's determination, the indebtedness would have been suspended or terminated under authority of 31 U.S.C. 3711(f). The member of the Armed Services must have been serving on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. In any case where all or any part of a debt of a covered member of the Armed Forces was collected, the Secretary may refund the amount collected, but only if the Secretary determines that, under the circumstances applicable with respect to the deceased member of the Armed Forces, it is appropriate to do so.

(2) In any case where all or any part of a debt of a covered member of the Armed Forces or veteran, as described under paragraph (b) of this section, was

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collected on or after September 11, 2001, the Secretary may refund the amount collected if, in the Secretary's determination, the indebtedness would have been terminated under authority of 38 U.S.C. 5302A. In addition, the Secretary may refund the amount only if he or she determines that the deceased individual is equitably entitled to the refund.

(e) Refunds under paragraph (d) of this section will be made to the estate of the decedent or, in its absence, to the decedent's next-of-kin in the order listed below.

(1) The decedent's spouse.

(2) The decedent's children (in equal shares).

(3) The decedent's parents (in equal shares).

(f) The authority exercised by the Secretary to suspend or terminate collection action and/or refund amounts collected on certain indebtedness is reserved to the Secretary and will not be delegated.

(g) Requests for a determination to suspend or terminate collection action and/or refund amounts previously collected as described in this section will be submitted to the Office of the Secretary through the Office of the General Counsel. Such requests for suspension or termination and/or refund may be initiated by the head of the VA administration having responsibility for the program that gave rise to the indebtedness, or any concerned staff office, or by the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. When a recommendation for refund under this section is initiated by the head of a staff office, or by the Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, the views of the head of the administration that administers the program that gave rise to the indebtedness will be obtained and transmitted with the recommendation of the initiating office.

(h) The provisions of this section concerning suspension or termination of collection actions and the refunding of moneys previously collected do not apply to any amounts owed the United States under any program carried out under 38 U.S.C. chapter 37.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5302A; 31 U.S.C. 3711(f)).

[75 FR 53201, Aug. 31, 2010]

REFERRALS TO GAO, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OR IRS

AUTHORITY: Sections 1.900 through 1.953 are issued under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 3711 through 3720E; 38 U.S.C. 501, and as noted in specific sections.

SOURCE: 52 FR 42111, 42112, Nov. 3, 1987, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1.950 Prompt referral.

(a) VA shall promptly refer debts to Department of Justice (DOJ) for litigation where aggressive collection activity has been taken in accordance with §§1.900 through 1.953, and such debts cannot be compromised, or on which collection activity cannot be suspended or terminated, in accordance with §§1.930 through 1.936 and §§1.940 through 1.944. Debts for which the principal amount is over \$1,000,000, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest and other late payment charges, shall be referred to the Civil Division or other division responsible for litigating such debts at DOJ. Debts for which the principal amount is \$1,000,000, or less, or such other amount as the Attorney General may direct, exclusive of interest or penalties, shall be referred to DOJ's Nationwide Central Intake Facility as required by the Claims Collection Litigation Report (CCLR) instructions. Debts should be referred as early as possible, consistent with aggressive agency collection activity and the observance of the standards contained in §§1.900 through 1.953, and, in any event, well within the period for initiating timely lawsuits against the debtors. VA shall make every effort to refer delinquent debts to DOJ for litigation within 1 year of the date such debts last became delinquent. In the case of guaranteed or insured loans, VA should make every effort to refer these delinquent debts to DOJ for litigation within 1 year from the date the loan was presented to VA for payment or reinsurance.

(b) DOJ has exclusive jurisdiction over the debts referred to it pursuant to this section. VA shall immediately terminate the use of any administrative collection activities to collect a debt at the time of the referral of that debt to DOJ. VA should advise DOJ of